

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /070 W

-----280509Z 106205 /12

P 252000Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1000

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL TORONTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, CA

SUBJECT: CNTU RADICAL PROBLEM COULD LEAD TO CREATION OF SOCIALIST
LABOR PARTY

REF: MONTREAL 0823

1. SUMMARY: CNTU LEADERSHIP CONSIDERED ITS PROBLEM WITH RADICAL GROUPS AMONG MEMBERSHIP SERIOUS ENOUGH TO BRING IT OUT INTO OPEN AT RECENTLY CONCLUDED ANNUAL MEETING (REFTEL). RADICALS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF COMMUNIST ROBERT COTE EFFECTIVELY DILUTED CNTU EXECUTIVE ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE THEM. AS A RESULT, SOME OBSERVERS NOW BELIEVE CNTU LEADERS HAVE CONCLUDED ONLY MEANS OF NEUTRALIZING RADICALS IS TO ESTABLISH A LONG DISCUSSED, LABOR-BACKED SOCIALIST PARTY. WHILE COMPELLING REASON FOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IS INTERNAL CNTU PROBLEMS, GROWING OPPOSITION OF LABOR MOVEMENT TO PQ GOVERNMENT ALSO FUELS SPECULATION SUCH A PARTY COULD SOON BE FORMED. GOQ APPEARS SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED THAT ITS HONEYMOON WITH ORGANIZED LABOR WAS SO SHORT-LIVED. HOWEVER, OPTIMISTS IN PARTY BELIEVE EVENTUAL EMERGENCE OF SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY--IF IT OCCURS--MIGHT BE

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HELPFUL IN BOOSTING PQ IMAGE OF MODERATION.

2. AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS IN QUEBEC CITY (REFTEL), CNTU LEADERSHIP BROUGHT PROBLEM OF LEFT-WING RADICAL ACTIVITY IN ITS LABOR CENTRAL OUT INTO OPEN. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CONVINCED CONVENTION TO PASS A MOTION THAT CNTU WAS AUTONOMOUS FROM VARIOUS SMALL RADICAL POLITICAL GROUPS,

ACCUSING GROUPS OF TRYING TO DIVIDE LABOR UNION MOVEMENT AND TARNISH IMAGE OF CNTU. HOWEVER, IT WAS AN EMPTY ACCOMPLISHMENT WHICH WILL NOT RESOLVE CNTU'S PROBLEMS. RADICALS--UNDER LEADERSHIP OF COMMUNIST ROBERT COTE--QUICKLY EFFECTED PASSAGE OF A MOTION WARNING LEADERSHIP NOT TO BEGIN ANY WITCH HUNTS AGAINST EXTREMISTS.

3. TO DO THIS, RADICALS USED EFFECTIVELY CLASSIC TACTICS WHICH OFTEN GAVE THEM VERBAL DOMINATION OF THIS BITTER CONVENTION. THROUGH CONCERNED

ACTIONS, RADICALS MONOPOLIZED MICROPHONE DURING DEBATE AND AFTER A MAJORITY HAD BEEN BORED TO TEARS BY ENDLESS DISCUSSION, THEY PRESENTED A SURPRISE RESOLUTION WHICH NEAR VACANT MEETING THEN PASSED. AS RESULT OF THEIR MILITANCY AND COHESION RADICALS WERE ABLE DOMINATE DEBATE DURING CONVENTION. FOR EXAMPLE, SPEAKERS OPPOSED CNTU PARTICIPATION IN THIS WEEK'S ECONOMIC SUMMIT BUT 63 PERCENT OF DELEGATES VOTED FOR CNTU TO ATTEND IN SECRET VOTE. THUS, THESE ACTIVISTS WHO DREAM OF HASTENING ARRIVAL OF SOCIALISM BY PARALYZING CURRENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM DOMINATE MEETINGS EVEN THOUGH THEY FORM ONLY SMALL MINORITY OF RANK-AND-FILE. ATTACKING THESE TACTICS OF RADICALS, CNTU LEADER NORBERT RODRIGUE SAID THEY WERE PLAYING INTO HANDS OF GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS WHO WANT TO DIVIDE LABOR.

4. RECENTLY, CNTU TOP LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN TRYING TO ADOPT A LESS RADICAL REFORMIST RATHER THAN REVOLUTIONARY STANCE. UNABLE TO EXPEL RADICALS, THEY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO NEUTRALIZE THEM. SOME OBSERVERS NOW BELIEVE CNTU LEADERS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT ONLY MEANS OF NEUTRALIZING RADICALS IS TO ESTABLISH THE LONG DISCUSSED, LABOR-BACKED SOCIALIST PARTY WHICH COULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL FOR LABOR'S POLITICAL INTERESTS WHILE ISOLATING FAR OUT GRAB BAG OF MARXISTS. IN INFORMED CIRCLES THERE IS SPECULATION THAT SUCH A PARTY MAY BE LAUNCHED IN QUEBEC IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OR AT LEAST BEFORE THE NEXT PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. BACKERS HOPE THAT IT WOULD STABILIZE CNTU AND FILL POLITICAL VACUUM WHICH RESULTS FROM FACT LABOR HAS NO INSTITUTIONAL MEANS OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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5. WHILE THE MOST COMPELLING REASON FOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IS INTERNAL CNTU PROBLEMS, GROWING OPPOSITION BETWEEN LABOR MOVEMENT AND PQ GOVERNMENT ALSO CONTRIBUTES HEAVILY TO POINT OF VIEW THAT SUCH A PARTY MAY SOON BE FORMED. THE PQ-LABOR HONEYMOON--IF THERE EVER WAS ONE--IS CLEARLY OVER AS PQ ADMINISTRATION IS BEING ROUNDLY CONDEMNED BY ALMOST EVERY LABOR ORGANIZATION IN THE PROVINCE ONLY SIX MONTHS AFTER TAKING POWER. LABOR FEELS GOQ HAS NO INTENTION MAKE MEANINGFUL CHANGES IN ECONOMIC SYSTEM, THAT IT IS COURTING INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT AT EXPENSE OF WORKING CLASS, AND THAT ITS FIRST BUDGET PERPETUATES EXISTING INJUSTICES IN SYSTEM. SOME ALSO FEAR INDEPENDENCE WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF ECONOMIC POWER FOR THE LABOR MOVEMENT UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED ALONG WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY. GOQ, FOR ITS PART, MUST BE DISAPPOINTED THAT ITS PRESUMED GOOD WILL IN LABOR CIRCLES HAS BEEN SO SHORT-LIVED. IT DID NOT EXPECT MATTERS TO COME TO A HEAD SO SOON. IF IT HAD, IT MIGHT WELL HAVE AVOIDED CALLING ECONOMIC SUMMIT BEING HELD NOW. LEVESQUE REMEMBERS THAT UNCOMPROMISING INSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION OF THIS KIND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED BOURASSA GOVERNMENT AND WAS HOPING TO AVOID IT BY ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL PEACE. ON OTHER HAND, MANY IN PQ BELIEVE ITS ELECTORAL CHANCES MIGHT

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IMPROVE AS IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY IDENTIFIED IN PUBLIC MIND AS A MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD PARTY. IN THAT SENSE, EMERGENCE OF A SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN BOOSTING PQ IMAGE OF MODERATION.

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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